

Title: **Trade Patterns for Spiny Lobster Harvested in the Gulf of Mexico and Caribbean Regions**

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Abstract: Spiny lobster (*Panulirus argus*) and related species represent one of the most important commercial fisheries targeted within the Gulf of Mexico and Caribbean regions. This important fishery extends from Florida (USA) to Brazil. The longlived, pelagic larval stage within the life cycle of spiny lobster reveal this species to be a resource truly shared amongst virtually all the harvesting nations within the Gulf of Mexico and Caribbean region. The high demand for this seafood product results in spiny lobster products being shipped worldwide. This study seeks to describe the trade patterns that exist for spiny lobster products among the major harvesting nations in the region, and the major consuming nations worldwide. The trade patterns are expressed in terms of volume and, where possible, value by product type (fresh, frozen). Trade data were obtained from several sources, include UN Comtrade and FAO. The trade patterns are described over a multi-year period and highlight changes in import and export patterns within the region by country. Where possible, trade patterns are compared to harvest trends by country. This study will provide insight into how the harvest levels, trade patterns and market shares by country have changed, as the demand for spiny lobster products has increased. Such information will be useful for any future co-management plans that may be developed for this regionally shared and important fishery.